

Police firing at anti-Sterlite protestors scar on democracy: Madras HC

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The HC has come down heavily on authorities over the firing incident, saying citizens should not be fired on at the behest of any corporate house | Express

By Express News Service

CHENNAI: Referring to the police firing at anti-Sterlite protestors in Thoothukudi in 2018, the Madras High Court on Monday said the incident is a scar on the face of our democracy. The first bench of Chief Justice Sanjib Banerjee and Justice PD Audikesavalu said citizens should not be fired on at the behest of any corporate house. "If there is any slightest indication that firing was done on behalf of any corporate, it must be addressed," the court said.

The observations were made when the court was hearing a PIL moved by rights activist Henri Tiphagne seeking a direction to the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) to reopen the probe and to furnish a report on the investigation.

The court directed the NHRC to report the steps taken to find a logical conclusion to the issue based on the report of its investigation division. As for the probe being conducted by the CBI, the bench said, “The matter should be brought to its logical end as expeditiously as possible, to give a meaningful closure to the matter, and the circumstances in which firing had to be resorted to against unarmed citizens must come out in the report.”

On enhancing the compensation to the families of those who died and were injured in the incident, the court said, “The State should consider a realistic quantum of compensation for either category, apart from others who suffered injuries. The State must be seen to be with the families and not an adversary, despite whatever may have happened.”The court adjourned the hearing to October 25 for the commission to file its report.